



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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November 30, 1999

TO: File

THRU: Pete Hess, Project Lead

THRU: Daron Haddock, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Paul Baker, Reclamation Biologist

RE: Willow Creek As-Built, Plateau Mining Corporation, Willow Creek Mine,
ACT/007/038-98G, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

SUMMARY:

Plateau Mining Corporation submitted as-built maps for the Willow Creek Mine on September 29, 1998. The Division received revised maps with several text changes on April 30, 1999, and additional changes on August 3, November 18, and November 22, 1999. These maps and text changes are needed to accurately show the permit area boundary, the disturbed area boundary, contours of the facilities area, and to reflect changes in the operations.

This review considers the major changes to the plan but is not a complete technical analysis.

ANALYSIS:

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

RIGHT OF ENTRY

Regulatory Reference: R645-301-114

Analysis:

Some of the right of entry information has been updated. Included in the updates is information about federal lease UTU-73975, dated February 1, 1997. It appears the information in the application is complete and accurate.

Findings:

Information provided in the application is considered adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INFORMATION**VEGETATION RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Regulatory Reference: R645-301-321

Analysis:

Changes have been made to Table 3.2-2 to clearly show the amount of previously disturbed and reclaimed, previously disturbed and not reclaimed, and previously undisturbed acreage. The total disturbed area acreage, 55.57 acres, appears to be correct.

Findings:

Information provided in the proposal is adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

MAPS, PLANS, AND CROSS SECTIONS OF RESOURCE INFORMATION

Regulatory Reference: R645-301-411. R645-301-323

Analysis:**Cultural Resource Maps**

Map 11 is a map of cultural resources in the area of the mine. Included are several historic and prehistoric sites and paleontological resources. This map has been in the confidential file and needs to remain there.

The new map has updated disturbed area information, but the baseline information has not changed. Contours are those that existed prior to construction. The map can be approved as submitted, but it needs to be in the confidential file.

Vegetation Reference Area and Wildlife Maps

The applicant has chosen to include maps of the proposed Barn Canyon shaft facility. Figure 3.2-1 is a map showing vegetation communities in the area, and it can be approved.

Map 5 shows vegetation in the region, including two reference areas near the Castle Gate Preparation Plant and two near the Willow Creek Mine. The reference area in Dry Canyon is not part of the revegetation success standards, but it is understood from the applicant that it may be needed in the future. Three reference areas in Crandall Canyon are shown on other maps in the mining and reclamation plan.

Map 6 shows vegetation communities and sampling sites in and near the mine and preparation plant. It also shows in more detail the locations of three reference areas. In a 1999 site visit, representatives of the Division and the applicant were not able to find two of the posts marking the grass/sage reference area or any of the markers for the mixed brush reference area. While it appears the map is properly marked according to previously-approved maps, these reference areas still need to be marked in the field.

The design of the original vegetation sampling was based on whether the site was previously disturbed, and the vegetation cover success standard is a weighted average of cover in areas previously disturbed and not previously disturbed by mining. Therefore, when sampling for revegetation success, it will be important to know exactly where the boundaries are. This information is clearly shown on Map 6 submitted with this amendment, and it is important that these boundaries be retained in any future revisions to this map.

The Regional Wildlife Map, Map 7, has been revised to include boundaries of the current permit area and recent raptor survey information. It shows eight golden eagle nests near the surface facilities and three other raptor nests in the permit area. The map is clear and of good quality and will be useful in determining potential effects on wildlife.

Map 8 shows where biological surveys were taken in and near Willow Creek. It shows the locations of fish and macroinvertebrate sample sites, including those samples that were taken in Willow Creek before it was relocated. This map can be approved.

Findings:

Information provided in the proposal is considered adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Proposed changes in the reviewed sections of the application are adequate and can be approved.